

# Kids & Screens

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## Overview

The purpose of this program is to help families get away from being dominated by screen time, whether it be television, phone, computer, or tablets. This is especially important during the developmental timeframe of children. In the modern technological world with cell phones that have more memory than the first computer, kids are bombarded with TikTok videos, Facebook videos and posts, texting and internet everything (including pornography). At first glance, one might think that screentime would lead to kids being more intellectual and informed, but the converse is true. Research shows that the constant overuse of technology is hurting and killing our youth.

By vastly reducing youth screentime to limited amounts that are developmentally appropriate (i.e.. No screentime for young children), you will improve their brain's development. The family will be brought closer together and closer to the church. As a dependence on screens takes up more and more of our lives, it leaves less time for family and God.

## Action Steps

1. Identify a program chairman to oversee all action steps and delegates tasks as needed. If coordinating with the parish, confirm pastor approval with the grand knight, and then set up subsequent parish ministry collaboration meetings to include PTO, CCD, and young adult ministries.
2. Build public interest before each Kids & Screens event! Promote the event in your parish and larger community through a variety of efforts:
  - Prominently display promotional posters
  - Bulletin announcements
  - Pulpit announcements
  - Posting on your council and parish website/social media pages
3. Plan a retreat:
  - a. The retreat can be any length.
  - b. Partner with other groups that are already having retreats. (i.e. Postman Pledge)
  - c. Ensure that there are no electronics. This goes for everyone involved. What message are we sending if the kids can't have phones, but the adults are on their phones the whole time. Lead by example.
  - d. Have fun events during the retreat. Board games, physical activities, cooking together, read a long (with physical books), etc. Use your imagination, the purpose is to get the kids to socialize.
  - e. Have food to nourish their bodies while you nourish their minds.
  - f. Include a religious component. Does not have to be the focus or the theme.
  - g. Have fun!



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4. Have a reading challenge:
  - a. Build interest in reading, try suggesting books based on movies or games. Allow the kids to see the difference between the book and the movie.
  - b. Start a book club to discuss the books the kids are reading and to allow them to participate in the group.
  - c. Have father/ son reading challenges. Who reads the most books, the longest book, etc. Make it fun.
  - d. Have prizes for the winners of the challenges!
5. Use resources to provide education to local schools and faith formation programs.
  - a. There are several organizations that are available to provide learning resources for schools and faith formation programs. List below.
  - b. Most educational materials can be built into the ongoing lesson plan. They do not have to be standalone classes.
6. Have events to educate the parents as well.
  - a. Include the parents in educational programs to inform them of the dangers. Most parents think that they are helping their children by giving them access to screentime (so they can get ahead!). However, the reverse is true.
  - b. While the kids are out playing games, have a meeting with their parents. Provide a meal for everyone, so that the families don't need to worry about eating. Remember food brings people together.
  - c. Invite the families to get involved in running a book club.
7. Use resources to promote Kids & Screens programs
  - a. Use programs where parents or council members can be advisors or coordinators.
  - b. Raise money to provide screen harms curriculums/books to the faith formation program or the local schools.
  - c. Presentation of materials
    - i. Set up a table after Mass.
    - ii. Pulpit announcements by the Priest
    - iii. Have lessons put in the Church bulletin
    - iv. Put the information on the Church website

### Resources

1. Screenstrong - <https://screenstrong.org/>
2. Dr. Victoria Dunkley <https://drdunckley.com/>
3. Smartphone Free Childhood <https://www.smartphonefreechildhoodus.com/>
4. Dr. Richard Freed: <https://www.richardfreed.com/>
5. Screen Smart Families – <https://screensmartfamilies.org/>
6. Dr. Nicholas Kardaras <https://www.drkardaras.com/>

